

Breastfeeding Peer Counseling to WIC Participants

Peer Counseling

The Alaska Breastfeeding Implementation Plan <http://hss.state.ak.us/ocs/nutri/Women/Programs/BreastFeeding/LovingSupport/FinalProgressReportDecember312003.pdf> guides the State's breastfeeding support and promotion initiatives.

Alaska WIC Program promotes and supports breastfeeding in collaboration with a strong statewide support network strengthening existing *Using Loving Support* projects and enhancing the continuity of WIC's current breastfeeding management and counseling efforts.

The Alaska WIC *Using Loving Support* to Implement Best Practices in Peer Counseling Program builds upon the research findings outlined in the management training provided by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) in May 2004.

Alaska's *Using Loving Support* Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program (BFPC) Implementation

Using Loving Support

Under the guidance of the State WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator, the Providence Alaska Medical Center (PAMC) WIC Program administers and implements the USDA/FNS model *Using Loving Support* to Implement Best Practices in Peer Counseling. The Alaska Association of WIC Coordinators (AKAWICC) Breastfeeding Committee, the Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition and community breastfeeding programs serve as advisors.

Staffing

Breastfeeding Peer Counselor (BFPC)

PAMC WIC and WIC LAs follow the research recommendations outlined in the Alaska's Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Implementation Plan (Attachment 1) to hire peer counselors.

- Enthusiasm for breastfeeding
- Basic communication skills
- Previous breastfeeding experience (6 months)
- Similarities with WIC participants served
- Current or previous WIC participant
- Similar ethnic background **if applicable depending on location of LA**
- Similar age
- Same language spoken **if applicable depending on location of LA**

Hiring Peer Counselors

PAMC WIC and WIC LAs follow the research recommendations outlined in the Alaska's Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Implementation Plan for WIC BFPC Practice Guidelines and Performance Expectations (Attachment 2), the WIC BFPC Coordinator/Manager Practice Guidelines and Performance Expectations (Attachment 3), and the WIC BFPC Trainer Practice Guidelines and Performance Expectations (Attachment 4).

The Alaska Association of WIC Coordinators (AKAWICC) Breastfeeding Committee

AKAWICC Breastfeeding Committee

The AKAWICC Breastfeeding Committee formed in October 2004 at the 2004 Fall AKAWICC Meeting. Membership is representative of WIC program statewide.

Purpose:

To support the *Using Loving Support* to Implement Best Practices in Peer Counseling Program, identify and develop a support plan for WIC communities statewide.

Goals and Activities:

1. Provide guidance and recommendations for implementing the Peer Counseling Training Program.
2. Provide resources and training for local agencies using current WIC resources.

Activities support/follow the Alaska's Implementation Plan: Breastfeeding Peer Counseling (Attachment 1); State WIC Policy and Procedure Manual (Chapter 2, Nutrition Services); Nutrition Services Principles 1 through 9.

AKAWICC Breastfeeding Committee Meetings

Committee work sessions at spring and fall AKAWICC Coordinator Meetings
Quarterly teleconferences

AKAWICC Breastfeeding Committee Members

Committee Chair: Lynn Copoulos, *Using Loving Support* to Implement Best Practices Counseling Program Coordinator

State Representatives: Fatima Hoger, State Breastfeeding Coordinator

Local Agency Representatives:

Marie Trigg, CPA, Nome WIC

Marilyn McCarr, CPA, Dillingham WIC

Heather Preece, WIC Lactation Specialist, Kodiak WIC

Heide Koslo, CPA Wasilla WIC

Jami Harris, Peer Counselor, PAMC WIC

Pam Phillmore, RD, L St Municipality of Anchorage WIC

Bonna Lindsey, Coordinator, Metlakatla WIC

Training

WIC Local Agency Coordinators

WIC Local Agency (LA) Coordinators will utilize the, “Peer Counseling: Making a Difference for WIC Families,” training tool to educate all WIC staff on the role of the BFPC.

WIC Local Agency Staff

All WIC LA staff will receive the “Peer Counseling: Making a Difference for WIC Families,” training to learn the role of the BFPC.

WIC Local Agency Breastfeeding Peer Counselor

BFPC will attend the **Breastfeeding Basics Using Loving Support (Attachment 5)** a 4-day training-introducing BFPC to the basic breastfeeding support skills needed and to allow them to practice those skills before sending them out to their communities. The training adapted and expanded for Alaska by Cathy Carothers, BLA, IBCLC and Linda Inglis, BC, IBCLC from Best Start Social Marketing is based on the nationally recognized Mississippi 3-Level training. “Using *Loving Support* to Build a Breastfeeding-Friendly Community.” The topics covered are:

- Basic breastfeeding management
- Anatomy and physiology of the breast
- Barriers to breastfeeding in WIC populations
- Best Start’s 3-Step Counseling Strategy
- Communication skills involving the phone and electronic communication
- Principles for forming partnerships of support in their communities
- Limitations of practice
- Increasing breastfeeding duration
- Referral information and resources
- Recognizing serious breastfeeding problems

Training

The 32-hour training outline, (WIC CPA Phase III Training) included at the end of this chapter, is provided by the University of Alaska Anchorage. After the 32-hour training, BFPC complete four Alaska WIC Breastfeeding Modules, located at <http://hss.state.ak.us/ocs/nutri/Admin/training/default.htm>, under the guidance of their WIC preceptors. Upon completion of the modules, trainees receive a **Breastfeeding Basics Using Loving Support Training** Certificate of Completion from the University of Alaska Anchorage.

Standardized Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program Policies and Procedures

Refer to the Alaska WIC BFPC Implementation Plan 2004, page 4, included at the end of this chapter.